so, the outline of the scheme, stating whether responsibility for implementation of the scheme has already been given to some institutions; and

(e) the names of such institutions and the basis of their selection?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NITISH KUMAR): (a) to (e) The distribution of tickets through private parties is not a new phenomena for Indian Railways. Issue of tickets by Out Agents, City Booking Agents, Rail Tourist Agents, Halt Agents, etc. exists since long. In addition, Rail Travellers' Service Agents (RTSAs) are appointed under Rail Travellers' Service Agents Rules, 1985 (made under direction of the Supreme Court) who purchase the tickets from Railway counters on behalf of passengers after collecting prescribed service charges. In order to facilitate rail reservation for common man it was proposed in the Railway Budget for the financial year 1999-2000 to provide Passenger Reservation System (PRS) terminals on experimental basis to travel agents authorised under under the Rail Tourist Agents Scheme and Rail Travellers Services Agents Scheme of the Railways at their cost and with suitable safeguards.

In addition, to proliferate retail railways ticketing and for improvement in customer service, it is also proposed to issue reserved tickets on Internet through authorised service providers. At present Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC), a public sector undertaking under the Ministry of Railways has been assigned a pilot project to facilitate railway ticketing in Delhi area through suitable service providers. Only expression of interests have been called for the IRCTC. The criteria for selection will be the travel related experience, availability of IT and Telecom infrastructure etc.

Pollutants Level in Delhi

*288. SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the quantity of RSPM, Nitrogen Dioxide and Sulphur in the atmosphere over Delhi has been over the safe level for the last many days;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps being taken to reduce their level which otherwise may tell upon the health of people living in the National Capital?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) The ambient air quality is being monitored at seven locations in Delhi. During July-August, 2001, the average levels of Respirable Suspended Particulate Matter (RSPM), Oxides of Nitrogen and Sulphur dioxide in Delhi have been reported by Central Pollution Control Board to be below their safe limits. However, teh prescribed limits of Respirable Suspended Particulate Matter (RSPM) and Oxide of Nitrogen were exceeded on a few days at a few locations mainly due to vehicular emissions.

(c) The steps taken to control pollution include the following:—

(i) Action Plan to control pollution in Delhi has been prepared and is being implemented.

(ii) Emission standards for on-road vehicles and mass emission standards for new vehicles have been notified under the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 and are enforced by Transport Departments of the State Governments including Delhi.

(iii) A comprehensive Policy for Abatement of Pollution that lays stress on both the control and preventive aspects of pollution has been formulated.

(iv) Unleaded petrol is supplied in the entire country from 1.2.2000 and diesel with 0.25% sulphur maximum content is supplied from 1.1.2000 in the entire country. Ultra low sulphur (0.05%) fuel (petrol and diesel) has also been introduced in major cities.

(v) Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) is supplied for automobiles through a number of retail outlets in Delhi to cater to the CNG vehicles.

(vi) Benzene concentration in petrol has been reduced.

(vii) A network of 290 Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Stations has been set up throughout the country.

(viii) Emission standards for industries have been notified under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 to check pollution.

(ix) Industries are also required to install necessary pollution control equipments before commissioning of their plants.

(x) Industries are required to take consent from the respective State Pollution Control Board under the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 11981.

Damage caused by rains in Kerala, Orissa etc.

*289. SHRI V. V. RAGHAVAN:
SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of damage caused by heavy rains in Kerala, Orissa, etc.;

(b) whether the affected State Governments have sought any financial assistance from the Centre for relief measures; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the assistance extended by the Centre?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI AJIT SINGH): (a) The Government of Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Orissa, Punjab, Tripura and Uttaranchal have reported damage to life and property due to heavy rains and floods during South-West Monsoon 2001. Statement-I indicating damage to life and property due to heavy rains and floods, as reported by the respective State Government is enclosed. (*See* below)

(b) and (c) It is primarily the responsibility of the State Government to take necessary measures in the wake of natural